



The End Of The Armed Struggle

An Interview With Pablo Monsanto, Guatemalan Guerrilla Commander In The URNG

For the first time, after 30 years of civil war, the Guatemalan government, army and guerrilla have committed themselves to "take to its conclusion a process of negotiation that allows, in the shortest time possible, the signing of a firm and lasting peace accord." Pablo Monsanto who is a member of the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) general command along with Gaspar Ilom, Rolando Moran and Carlos Gonzalez explains that the guerrilla won't deliver its weapons until achieving the demilitarization and democratization of Guatemala with U.N verification.

Is a definitive peace as close as it appears in Guatemala?

In the negotiation process we are going to calmly and seriously address such important questions as the democratization of Guatemala, respect for human rights, constitutional and electoral reforms, the strengthening of civil power and the demilitarization of the country, the identity of the indigenous peoples and the economic and social changes related to the causes of the conflict. Because of the depth and breadth of the topics each one will take several meetings. We need to address them seriously and that requires sufficient time. We took up arms against a system of oppression that remains intact and that is why we have to change it. With negotiation we enter into a new form of struggle, in a new political space but without leaving our weapons.

Why did the government and army accept the negotiations?

Without the armed struggle that we have developed the government never would have sat down with us. The negotiations are opened from the starting point that the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) shows that in practice we are a real military and political force with great impact in the country, that we are one of the main protagonists in the actual political process. Our participation has been secured not only through the military operations of the URNG's armed units but also as political force through the influence we exercise throughout Guatemalan society. That participation, which until now has been in that manner, is strengthened and becomes more viable through negotiation. A negotiation process which, as I was telling you, allows us to open a new form of struggle. It is a new political space in which we will try to achieve the goals and objectives for which we initiated the armed struggle in our country thirty years ago.

Nevertheless, it has been said that the URNG proposed the negotiations because it is militarily

weakened and politically vulnerable due to international changes.

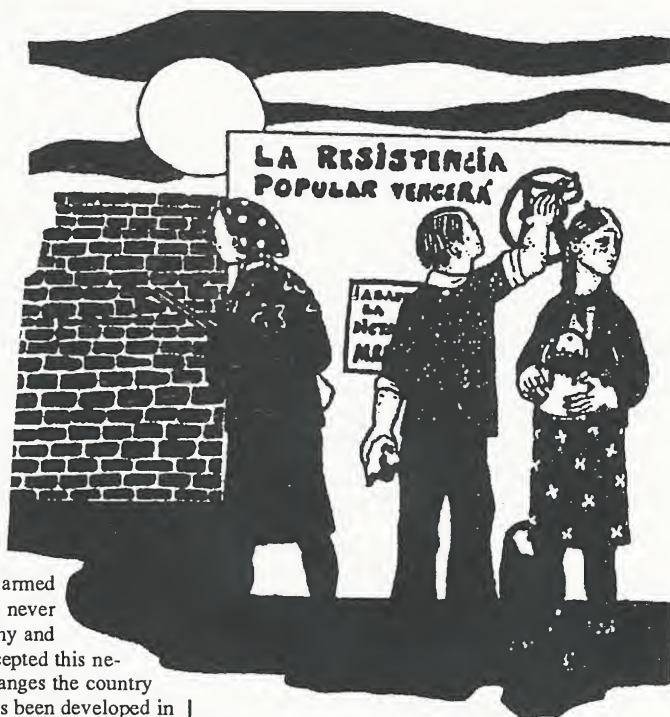
On the contrary. I can assure you that the guerrilla in Guatemala is now much stronger than before. We have resolved many problems with regards to our own forces and resources. We have resolved the logistical problems and the formation of military cadre. We have very good officers with a lot of experience together with combatants of great capability. Besides, the growth of our forces is a permanent process. Of course the international situation influences our perspective and on the form our movement must take but not to the point of isolating us due to the fact that we maintain the armed struggle. I insist that without the armed struggle the government would never have accepted negotiating, the army and government would never have accepted this negotiation process to realize the changes the country needs. This armed struggle that has been developed in Guatemala wasn't introduced by outsiders as many thought but surged forth as a consequence of the imposition of a system of repression and oppression that has put down the Guatemalan people favouring only a small group of the oligarchy.

Why did the URNG insist so much on the need for the army to be represented in the negotiations?

The army has the real power in Guatemala and the government has only a little. It is absolutely necessary to have the military present for the negotiations to succeed. The army has to commit itself to follow these accords. The reality of the country for many years, which can't be changed in two or three months, shows that the army has always kept power in its hands. The structures through which it politically and militarily controls the population remains intact. First the army was the instrument of domination by the oligarchy over our people and later began to participate in the economic benefits through the exercise of power. This has to end now.

What does the URNG propose for the army's future?

We have to demilitarize Guatemalan society and dismantle this entire system of military control established over the decades. We don't propose the disappearance of the army but its diminution. And the reduction of its troops and its expenses which currently consumes 32% of the national budget. These resources should be invested in education, health and production.



We also propose that it stop intervening in the economy, administration of the state and education. There are a number of militarized educational centres in Guatemala that have to return to the Ministry of Education. It isn't the army that should have the education of Guatemalan youth in its hands. The army must be transformed. We are not seeking to finish it but that it fulfil its functions in accordance with the constitution, that it defend the national sovereignty and not wage war on its own people. It should be an army that with its attitude and activities gains the respect and love of the Guatemalan people. Now it is the most feared and hated institution. For them to be appreciated the military will have to change. Now the people consider them torturers, thieves and murderers because the majority of military chiefs have enriched themselves through the exercise of power. We have to change that image but to change it we have to put the army in functions that correspond it in a democratic society.

In all the Latin American processes of transition to democracy the most difficult question to resolve is whether to apply forgive and forget or trial and punishment to military men accused of serious human rights violations. What will happen in Guatemala?

We must put an end to impunity and punish the violators of human rights. Justice is something the Guatemalan people seek and cannot be denied to them. Those who have committed acts of genocide should be judged and punished by Guatemalan justice.

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Camilism As A Form Of National Identity

An Interview With A Member Of The UCELN

The offensive realized by the guerrilla coordinating group "Simon Bolivar" against the government of Cesar Gaviria in Colombia makes the possibilities of peace in this Latin American country more remote. When many analysts visualize the National Constituent Assembly as a bridge of dialogue between Colombians, distinct military and political events generate a new belligerent period. The demobilization of the 19th of April Movement (M-19) and their participation in the Assembly with 19 delegates. The recent demobilization of the PRT and the indigenous organization Quintin Lame, and the surrender of arms by the Popular Liberation Army (EPL) culminate a process of dialogue between these guerrilla sectors and the Gaviria administration which create the illusion of a real peace process in which a majority of Colombians participate in; nevertheless serious political, social and historical factors persist which make it difficult, such as drug trafficking, the paramilitary groups, backwards and fascist sectors in the armed forces as well as the position of the Guerrilla Coordination which sets its own political and social conditions to integrate itself into the peace process which argues that the motivating causes of the armed struggle are still maintained.

With all of these questions we interview Milton Hernandez, member of the National Directorate of the National Liberation Army Camilista Union (UCELN) who is also this group's coordinator within the Guerrilla Coordination "Simon Bolivar".

What is the position of the Guerrilla Coordination and the UCELN with regards to the current situation?

From the 17th through the 27th of September 1990 we had a meeting of the Guerrilla Coordination "Simon Bolivar" (CGSM) to seek a means to strengthen the unitary process of our coordination with the goal of creating a political platform that will give a real solution to all of Colombia, in a real and unitary manner.

The project presented for the Coordination was based on the following parameters; the necessity of creating a national commission that would explore a dialogue between the confronted parts of the country, between the government and the Coordination, the commission should encompass all of the parties, of all branches and roots and among all of them put together a work agenda which would allow a dialogue between the Coordination and the government.

We set out from the base that any negotiation cannot be initiated on a unilateral basis, because we believe that any peace proposal should comprise, from the beginning, the insurgent movement with the official part of the armed forces. And we believe that the Colombian military should also be at the negotiating table as their participation should guarantee a real ceasefire.

For this process it is absolutely necessary for the paramilitary groups to be demobilized, to achieve the demilitarization of Colombian life. Under these premises a real peace process could be achieved. But up to the moment we believe the armed forces aren't willing to stop their actions, that at no time have they stopped conducting their operations against the civilian population, with constant bombing on the Coordinations zones

of influence.

If this situation is taken into account, the peace policy of Cesar Gaviria's government in some aspects has to do with the demobilization and deactivation of the mass movement. Under these premises, our reinsertion into civil life of the country is made possible.

We also think that to guarantee a serious dialogue it is necessary to create an international commission to monitor whatever agreement is reached.

Due to these circumstances, we see the need for an international mediator, including the possibility of participation of some U.N. commission, the European Parliament, the presence of personalities like Daniel Ortega. We are prepared to accept the presence of Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez, as guarantors of possible agreements between the Coordination and the government.

We don't participate in the Constituent Assembly because it is impossible to have an Assembly on the margin of the armed movement, it would mean leaving out one of the country's political factors as we are those up in arms. We are not prepared to sign a blank check for militarism and the anti-democrats.

Many Leftist political forces have supported the Constituent Assembly. You consider that the Assembly cannot help in the pacification process.

We set forth that the order of the day in Colombia is the need for profound economic and social transformations, that the national life is not solely a political and military confrontation between the insurgency and government forces. Because our struggle is the product of conditions of poverty and misery and repression which falls on our people.

We think that in the measure the Assembly is an alternative of democracy, of sovereignty, of the possibility that allows the dismantling of the state of siege, control of the national security policy which so much affects the interests of the Colombian nation - on this democratic base and with the participation of all political forces and without the reactionary forces continuing to rule the nation's life, it will resolve the problems that Colombia has.

The viability of the armed struggle is not questioned.

The previous government of Virgilio Barco and the current government of Gaviria have sought to weaken and divide the Guerrilla Coordination, on the basis of a unilateral proposal which has led to a demobilization process, disadvantageous for the armed movement, as happened with the M-19 and as is currently happening with a sector of the EPL.

We think that in Colombia we are living through a process of regrouping of the insurgent movement, given the breakaway of M-19 from the Coordination in its political and military foundations and of the difficulties we are currently having with diverse factions within a sector of the EPL. Facing this situation the commanders of the Coordination have set out the basis of our action to confront the actual problems with a strategic, global and unitarian program to give a political solution to the conflict.

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From Bullets To Ballots

It would appear that negotiations between Colombia's government and guerrillas are the latest fashion. Despite the fact that they have carried out the greatest guerrilla offensive in recent times since they were dislodged from their headquarters in December, all the left-wing armed groups - some of them former members of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Group - have decided to negotiate with the government.

If the results of a political poll taken by *Semana* magazine at the beginning of the year reflect the feelings of the Colombian people, 83% of the population favour talking with the guerrillas and only 12% favour "declaring war on them."

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) are following in the footsteps of the April 19 Movement (M-19) and the People's Liberation Army (EPL), former members of the Coordinating Group who signed peace agreements with the government.

The decision, announced on February 9, comes after a guerrilla offensive in which dozens of police officers died. The military campaign began after the FARC and ELN were bombed and forced to withdraw from their headquarters in Uribe, south of Bogota.

The Coordinating Group said it was ready to begin negotiations with the Colombian government to put an end to the wave of violence. A public statement said that it was now up to the government to appoint a commission and indicate the conditions under which the conversations will take place. The organization stated that the talks should begin in Uribe.

Government minister Humberto de la Calle Lombana had said that he would prefer to dialogue abroad, due to the climate of violence prevalent in the country. He had also indicated that he would prefer to negotiate peace personally, instead of naming commissions which could drag the process out.

M-19, which now has elected representatives in the National Constituent Assembly (the body charged with drawing up a new constitution for the country), has adopted a new organizational structure, almost a year after having put down its arms. The new party - still lacking a name - will be nationalist, centre-left and identified with European social democracy.

It is extremely probable that the EPL, about to become completely legal, will join the new party en masse.

M-19 is also planning to take part in the elections for mayors and public corporations, to be held in March 1992. It aspires to winning the mayoralty of Bogota, the second most important post in the country after the presidency.

In *Semana's* poll, Antonio Navarro Wolf, M-19's leader, was declared public figure of the year 1990 by a majority of the public. When asked "if presidential elections were to take place today, for whom would you vote?", 44% chose Navarro, followed at a distance by Ernesto Samper, current development minister.

(March/91, *Barricada International*)

Late Addition (August/91): After 23 years of struggle the Popular Liberation Army (EPL) has announced its dissolution and will join M-19 to participate in the upcoming legislative elections in October.

(Aug. 18/91 *Nicaragua Solidarity Network Bulletin*)

STOP THE LEGAL LYNCHING OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

To our liberation movements, the international community,
and all progressive people:

The State of Pennsylvania is planning the execution of a U.S. political prisoner. Unless we organize to stop it, MUMIA ABU-JAMAL will soon become the first political prisoner executed in this country since the Rosenbergs.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has been on death row since 1982. A former Black Panther, a journalist, and a supporter of MOVE, Mumia has been a target of the Philadelphia Police Department since the late 1960's. His articles for the Panther Party newspaper exposed the racist violence of the Philadelphia police and their chief, Frank Rizzo. Rizzo's response was a military style raid against the Panther headquarters, vicious beatings of its members, and a series of trumped-up charges. Mumia was one of those singled out.

In the 1970's, Frank Rizzo was the 'law and order' mayor of Philadelphia, and Mumia was one of the journalists willing to speak out against the violence of his administration. In 1978, when Rizzo ordered the police to besiege and then assault a MOVE house, Mumia was the only reporter to interview MOVE members. Rizzo publicly vowed revenge.

In December 1981, Mumia saw his brother being beaten by a policeman. Mumia intervened. The policeman was killed and Mumia critically wounded. The trial was a farce presided over by a judge who was a retired member of the Fraternal Order of police. He refused Mumia's request to represent himself. Black people were systematically excluded from the jury. An article about Mumia at age 16 for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* was introduced to prove 'intent' of an alleged long-held wish to kill cops and to secure the death penalty.

There is a long history of using the death penalty against radicals: Haymarket Square martyrs, Joe Hill, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs. Numerous organizers of the African-American, Native American, Mexican, Puerto Rican and Asian American communities historically have been executed with or without the benefit of a trial. In the 1960's and 70's, one of the tactics favoured by the FBI was to accuse those it considered enemies of the government of shooting at or killing police. This was used to justify the police executions of Panthers Bobby Hutton, Zayd Malik Shakur and Fred Hampton and of Puerto Rican Independence activists Soto-Arriaga and Dario Rosado. Some of the longest-held political prisoners and prisoners-of-war in the U.S., including many former Black Panthers and American Indian Movement leader, Leonard Peltier, are still held in prison on trumped-up charges of killing police or FBI agents. Dhoruba bin Wahad, a former leader of the New York Black Panther Party, was recently freed after doing 19 years in prison on a fabricated charge of shooting two police.

We need to stop the railroad of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The death penalty means we have little time to do it. Mumia has exhausted his state appeals and Pennsylvania's governor Robert Casey has begun signing death warrants. The U.S. Supreme Court just added its own blessing by refusing to review the case.

We must not allow the same racist fear and hatred of African-American self-determination that brought about COINTELPRO to execute Mumia. We cannot allow the state to finish the job the FBI and Philadelphia police started when they dropped the bomb on the MOVE house in May 1985 killing 11 men, women and children, by putting Mumia Abu-Jamal to death. We must put a stop to this genocidal agenda that has put more than 2400 Third World and white working class people on death rows around the country. The death penalty has already been used to kill children, the

mentally retarded, and the innocent. Now, unless we stop it, it will again be used as a tool of political revenge. The struggle against racism and injustice in this country has had enough martyrs.

We, the undersigned Prisoners Of War, political prisoners, and politically conscious social prisoners demand that Governor Casey commute the death sentence of Mumia Abu-Jamal. (Write to Gov. Robert Casey, Main Capitol Bldg., Rm. 225, Harrisburg, PA, 17120, USA.) We call upon our movements, our communities, progressive nations and all anti-racist people committed to human rights to join us in undertaking all possible measures to stop this execution. We urge you to adopt this case as the highest priority in the struggle for justice. Only our collective power can save this man that the Black community of Philadelphia calls "the Voice of the Voiceless."

Sundiata Acoli
Carlos Africa
Chuckie (Sims) Africa
Delbert (Orr) Africa
Ramona Africa
William Phillips Africa
Silvia Baraldini
A. Jahaad Bernier
Alan Berkman
Tim Blunk
Anthony X Bradshaw
Marilyn Buck
Judy Clark
Mark Cook
Pamela Cooper
William Davenport-El
Bill Dunne
Malik S. El-Amin
Lawrence Atiim Epps
Elizama Escobar
Linda Evans
Herman Ferguson
Bro. Cecilio Chui Ferguson-El
Walter Figueroa
Larry W. Giddings
David Gilbert
Rickke L. Green
Bashir Hameed
Tarik James Haskins
Eddie Hatcher
Robert Seth Hayes
Teddy Jah Heath and 80 brothers at
Sullivan prison, Fallsburg, N.Y.
Sekou Imarobge
Ricardo Hunter-Bey
Sekou Cinque T.M. Kambui

Yu Kikumura
Barbara Curzi-Laaman
Jaan Karl Laaman
Maliki Shakur Latine
Raymond Luc Levasseur
Abdul Majid
Carol Manning
Tom Manning
Adolpho Matos
Ed Mead
Jalil Muntaquin
Sekou Odinga
Carl Kabet Omi
Dylcia Pagan
Richard Picariello
Michael Pitts
Geronimo jiJaga Pratt
Ida Luz Rodriguez
Susan Rosenberg
Hanif Shabazz Bey
Mutulu Shakur
Yusuf A. Shakur
Gregory Smith
Standing Deer
Awali Stoneham
Kojo Bomani Sababu
Richard Thompson
Alejandrina Torres
Kazi Toure
Carmen Valentin
Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa
Nuh Washington
Laura Whitehorn
Richard Williams
Paul Wright
Jerry Zawada

FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL! ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POWS!

Funds are urgently needed to support the campaign to save Mumia's life!

New Afrikan Network in Defense of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, P.O.
Box 90604, Washington, D.C. 20090 USA

Freedom Now!/DC Campaign for Amnesty and Human Rights for Political Prisoners
in the U.S., P.O. Box 28191, Washington, D.C. 20038 USA

Partisan Defense Committee c/o Rachel Wolkenstein, Esq., P.O. Box 99, Canal
Street Station, New York, NY 10013 USA

Name _____
Address _____

Enclosed is donation of \$ _____ Please send me more information
Clip and send to one of the groups at left, earmark for Mumia campaign.



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Does the simultaneous negotiations in El Salvador and Guatemala benefit you?

That depends on the results of the Salvadoran process. If it fails it'll be negative for us, if it succeeds it benefits us.

Are there ideological conflicts among the different groups that form the URNG over what is considered absolutely necessary to obtain in the negotiations to sign the peace accords?

In no manner. The general command of the URNG has clearly defined what the goals of the accords are in each situation. We struggle for realistic questions, not for what we wish it to be. We are not voluntarists. We know, for example, that at this moment in Guatemala we cannot develop socialist forms of production so we aren't going to impose them. That can be accomplished when the social and economic conditions exist to produce it. Right now we simply hope to achieve the political changes for the demilitarization and democratization of the country as well as the necessary changes to take the Guatemalan people out of misery. It is very sad that Guatemala is the poorest country in the hemisphere after Haiti, having all the natural resources to take advantage of them for the benefit of the entire Guatemalan population.

When will you surrender your weapons?

There will be no demobilization or surrender of weapons until the political accords take into account the fundamental changes we are proposing and these changes begin to take place under U.N. verification.
(May 24/91, Brecha)

Late Addition: On July 25/91 the URNG and the Guatemalan government signed an agreement dealing with the democratization of Guatemala. The "Queretaro Accord" dealt with attempting to achieve civilian rule over the military, an end to repression and electoral fraud, respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and democratizing the social, economic, political and cultural life of Guatemala.

(Aug. 4/91, Nicaragua Solidarity Network Bulletin)

...Camilism continued from page 2

Our unitarian perspective takes us to conceive of just one revolutionary army, like the creation of just one revolutionary army. For us the alternative is a process of peace and social justice but with a global exit to the conflict.

We believe that the viability of the armed struggle is not questioned, nor is the path of scientific socialism because we believe it gave rise to the other, in factors with a social, economic and political origin. The insurgent movement in Columbia is not in a defeated situation, neither militarily nor politically, we see ourselves as a movement with the political and military capacity to give answers to the actual situation in the country.

The ELN, now called the UCELN, is one of the oldest movements in Columbia. Nevertheless, it had a long period of silence. What were the reasons for this?

Today the UCELN is a movement with a large capacity for self-criticism and replanning of the political and military order; this analytical process, despite the continuous crisis we live in, such as the attack in 1973 that almost liquidated us militarily, or as a series of political errors that took us to a crisis within the old ELN.

Due to this process we live in an intense level of debates and replanning from which we emerged with renovated forces in 1982-83. In reality we have been able to arrive at a strategic proposal for the Colombian revolution. We have important political and military forces which operate throughout the country in conjunction with the FARC and a sector of the EPL-Caraballo.

Together with them we are pushing a new proposal for a political solution and of unity for the insurgent movement, in the search for one army. We believe that the political base which has taken the UCELN has to be seen with a profound outlook of rectification in relation to the country and with the masses, correcting our military mistakes.

The history of our organization is a bit like the history of Christ that the bible teaches us, when all believe that Christ is dead he rises among them once more.

The ideological conception of the UCELN is Marxism-Leninism.

The presence of Camilio Torres, as well as that of Commandante "ex-priest" Manuel Perez, has this had religious or ideological implications?

The ideological conception of the Camilista Union ELN is Marxism-Leninism as a scientific theory, our concept of proletarian internationalism, with a Marxism adapted to our class struggle.

We have conceived Marxism in a Latin American context, as a nexus to our political, economic and cul-



Arm The Spirit is an information collective focusing on militant and revolutionary struggles. Our perspective is autonomous but we see a need to discuss and analyse all forms of left resistance in order to contribute to a revolutionary process. We welcome and encourage others to join us in our work.

La Lucha Continua!

tural realities, redeeming the great Latin American revolutionary leaders such as Jose Antonio Galan, Simon Bolivar, Artigas and Che Guevara. They are part of the UCELN's conception and also of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator. We are developing a Marxism according to our new continental and Latin American realities.

We understand Camilismo as a form of national identity because Camilo Torres was a forger of national identity, of unity with the masses, an initiator of the revolutionary war, in this country, which we think generally reflects on our nation.

Many versions have circulated about one of your principle leaders, Manuel Perez, including talk about his separation due to internal problems. What is the truth behind all this?

According to the media at the oligarchy's service, Manuel Perez has been killed several times, in 1977 he was listed as killed, supposedly by our own revolutionary ranks. And there are always media campaigns against him for being our maximum revolutionary leader.

These versions have a basic goal, to try and divide our organization with the objective of creating disinformation. Manuel was elected at our Second Congress of December 1989 by acclamation as our political leader and today acts together with Commandante Manuel Maralunda and Manuel Carabello as the supreme commanders of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator.

Farewell To Arms

Alberto Malbrich, spokesperson for the leadership of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, announced in the communist weekly El Siglo, that they were abandoning the armed struggle. He affirmed that: "No member of the Front is armed nor has hidden weapons. We have said goodbye to them."

Despite this, there still remains, 3 political-military organizations that employ all forms of struggle: MAPU Lautaro, MIR-Pascal and the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front-Autonomous.
(Mate Amargo)

Editorial Notes

With this issue we have gone back to a smaller format due to financial considerations and the ever changing situations in Central and South America. A common theme that runs through the struggles in Latin America is the decision to either negotiate (with notable exceptions) or discontinue the armed struggle. As we were putting together this issue new developments made information that we wished to include become redundant. The decision to negotiate or surrender arms has its roots in the rapidly changing world situation of which any analysis on our part would be impossible to include in these few pages. We can only watch and wait...

Subscriptions for this bulletin are \$10.00 for 10 issues. We will also be publishing a magazine that will expand upon what we cover in the bulletin. At this moment we have no subscription rate for it but we hope to publish it at least twice a year. The bulletin will come out at least 10 times a year on a near monthly basis. We are also in the process of setting up a small mailorder literature service. Please send \$1 for the mailorder list. We accept cash (conceal it well) or money orders but no cheques. If sending a money order please do not put 'Arm The Spirit' just leave it blank. We look forward to hearing from you.

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